



**U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement**

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News Release

ICE removes 482 criminal aliens, status violators from tri-state area during February

ATLANTA—Four hundred eighty-two criminal and non-criminal aliens were deported from the tri-state area last month by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention and removal officers.

Those deported were lawfully ordered to leave the United States by a federal immigration judge or field office director and were removed to the following countries: Mexico, Honduras, China, Peru, El Salvador, Jamaica, Haiti, Guatemala, India and Pakistan.

The offenses of the criminal aliens removed included drug possession, aggravated assault, sex offenses, weapons violations, theft, fraud, robbery, murder, arson, rape, prostitution, selling marijuana, smuggling aliens, counterfeiting, indecent exposure, child molestation, second-degree battery and many others. The majority of the “non-criminal” aliens had illegally entered the country, but had not been convicted of any other crime.

Detention and removal officers successfully removed the 482 individuals from the U.S. setting a record number of removals. Approximately 83% of those removed were convicted as criminal aliens.

“We are committed to protecting our communities and restoring integrity to the nation's immigration system,” said ICE Field Office Director John Mata. “Our office helps protect the public by taking criminals and lawbreakers off the streets and deporting them to their countries of citizenship.”

Mata heads the ICE Atlanta Detention and Removal Office, which includes Georgia, as well as North and South Carolina.

This ongoing enforcement is part of a 10-year strategic national initiative focused on locating, apprehending and removing the more than 400,000 absconders and 80,000 fugitive criminal aliens with outstanding final orders of removal that are hiding in the United States.

Criminal aliens are non-citizens who have committed felonies or other crimes that make them ineligible to remain in the United States in accordance with the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA). Status violators have overstayed the authorized period or otherwise fallen out of their status at the time of admission, and “non-criminal” aliens have no legal status to be in the United States under the Act, but have not been convicted of any additional crimes.

A primary goal of ICE’s Detention and Removal Office is to reduce the number of alien absconders who are hiding in the United States. Absconders are typically foreign nationals who have been ordered removed by a federal immigration judge, but failed to comply with those orders. Since absconders have already been through immigration proceedings, they are subject to immediate removal from the country. Congress has recently appropriated funds and positions to recruit and hire additional fugitive operations teams to seek out and remove those absconders and fugitives.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.